



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAS Key West Airfield Operations Draft EIS Available for Public Review: U.S. Navy Invites Public Comment

The U.S. Navy has prepared and released to the public a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects that may result from airfield training operations at Naval Air Station (NAS) Key West.

The DEIS has been made available for review and comment for 45 days. Anyone who requests a copy of the EIS will receive a CD copy in the mail. Electronic copies of the Draft EIS can be accessed on the project website. In addition, paper copies of the Draft EIS have been distributed to the Monroe County public libraries listed in notices that were sent to the project mailing list, in the newspaper, and on the project website. Public meetings will be conducted near NAS Key West during the review period. All public comments received will be reviewed, considered, and addressed appropriately in the Final EIS.

Two public meetings have also been scheduled. These meetings will be conducted as informal open house sessions, providing members of the public the opportunity to ask questions of Navy representatives as well as the opportunity to comment in writing on the Draft EIS. The first meeting will be conducted Wednesday, August 1, in the Conference Room of the Doubletree by Hilton Grand Key Resort, 3990 South Roosevelt Blvd., Key West. The second will be conducted Thursday, August 2, at the Tennessee Williams Theater at the Florida Keys Community College, 5901 College Rd., Key West. Both meetings will be from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Public input is extremely important in order for the Navy to fully understand community concerns and relevant issues. Individuals interested in the project are strongly encouraged to provide their comments on the document within the public comment period. Comments can be submitted via mail to the following address: Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southeast, NAS Key West Air Operations EIS Project Manager, P.O. Box 30, Building 903, NAS Jacksonville, FL 32212 or electronically via the project Web site: <http://www.keywesteis.com>.

The DEIS analyzes the effects of the introduction of new aircraft and potential increases in flight operations at NAS Key West.

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NAS KEY WEST AIRFIELD OPERATIONS DRAFT EIS-2-2-2-2

New aircraft that are anticipated to train and operate at NAS Key West include:

- The Navy F-35C, Joint Strike Fighter carrier variant, is scheduled to begin to replace the Navy FA-18C/D beginning in 2016 with the transition expected to be completed by 2029.
- The Navy P-8 Poseidon is replacing the P-3 Orion beginning this year with the transition scheduled to be completed by 2019.
- The Marine Corps F-35B (short takeoff and vertical landing variant) and F-35C (aircraft carrier variant) Joint Strike Fighter are scheduled to begin to replace Marine Corps AV-8B and FA-18C/D aircraft between this year and 2023.
- The Air Force F-35A, Joint Strike Fighter conventional takeoff and landing variant, is scheduled to begin to replace the F-16, beginning with the transition of the Air Combat Command operational aircraft in 2013; transition to be completed by 2017.
- Some Air Force F-15 Eagles are being replaced with the F-22 Raptors, with the transition already underway.
- The Navy EA-6B Prowlers are being replaced with the EA-18G Growlers, with the transition already underway.
- The Navy E-2C Hawkeyes are being replaced with the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye, with the transition already underway.

Two of the three alternatives examined in the DEIS include a potential increase in flight operations, resulting in a potential increase in community noise. The Navy recognizes that aircraft noise is a concern to some in the community, and noise analysis is a key part of the study.

NAS Key West is a vital national asset for aviation training, providing year-round fair weather and unencumbered airspace that cannot be easily duplicated elsewhere for air-to-air combat training and tactical maneuvering training. In order for pilots to maintain their proficiency for combat readiness, they must complete the type of training requirements that are afforded by the combination of the NAS Key West and Key West Range Complex. The primary users of NAS Key West are Navy active and reserve fleet fighter squadrons. Other units that use the NAS Key West airfield are Chief of Naval Air Training squadrons and Fleet Replacement Squadrons, as well as U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps aircraft, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard, other federal agencies, and allied force units.

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NOTE: Media interested in attending any of the public meetings or in need of additional information should contact Ted Brown, U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs at 757-836-4427.